

2. Sociocultural Context

In 1830, the United States census takers reported that all of Delaware's inhabitants lived in rural areas. By 1880, only two-thirds did; the other third lived in one of the state's three urban settlements, principally Wilmington. Over this period, Delaware's population almost doubled, increasing from 76,748 to 146,608. The state's rural population, however, increased just over 20%. In fact, between 1830 and 1840, the state's rural areas lost almost 10% of their population, some to outmigration resulting from the agricultural crisis, the rest to the designation of Wilmington as an urban settlement for the first time in 1840. At the end of this period, Delaware's rural population still stood under 100,000.

As the state's population grew and redistributed itself between rural and urban areas, its racial distribution changed as well (Table 5). The percentage African Americans comprised in Delaware's population dropped from 22.2% in 1850 to 18% in 1880. Nevertheless, the population increased by more than 6,000 individuals over this period. A closer look at the distribution of African Americans in the hundreds of New Castle and Kent counties in 1860 reveals more about their residential experience (Table 6). African Americans composed just under 20% of New Castle and Kent counties' 93,405 inhabitants that year. Just over one-half lived in New Castle County, although African Americans composed a larger proportion of Kent County's population (15% in New Castle, 27% in Kent). Moreover, although they made up only 10% of Wilmington's total population, almost one-quarter of New Castle County's African Americans resided in the city, or 12% of the two counties' total African American population. Outside of Wilmington, New Castle County's African American population increased dramatically from the northern to southern end of the county. Only an average of 6% of the Piedmont hundreds' population consisted of African Americans, compared to 28% of Appoquinimink's and over one-third, 36%, in the wealthy agricultural hundred of St. Georges. In Kent County, African Americans distributed themselves more evenly across the landscape. They averaged 27% of the population in each hundred, ranging from 19% in Mispillion to 30% in Little Creek.

Census enumerations also provide information on Delawareans employed in agriculture beginning in 1840. That year, 9,723 residents of New Castle and Kent counties worked in agriculture, forming 69.5% of the counties' working population. Just over one-half (52.6%) of the counties' farmers and farm laborers worked in Kent County (U. S. Bureau of the Census 1841: 31), where they composed 23.2% of the total population (Table 7). This figure is 7.7% lower than New Castle County, where only 2.2% of Wilmington's population had agricultural employment that year. Ten years later, at mid-century, 35.7% (7,884) of Delaware's employed free males over age 15 labored in farming (U. S. Bureau of the Census 1853: lxxx).

TABLE 5

DELAWARE'S POPULATION, BY RACE, 1850-1880
(Source: U.S. Bureau of Census 1943: 896)

<u>CENSUS YEAR</u>	<u>ALL CLASSES</u>		<u>EUROPEAN AMERICAN</u>		<u>AFRICAN AMERICAN</u>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1880	146,608	100	120,160	82.0	26,442	18.0
1870	125,015	100	102,221	81.8	22,794	18.2
1860	112,216	100	90,589	80.7	21,627	19.3
1850	91,532	100	71,169	77.8	20,363	22.2

TABLE 6
New Castle and Kent County Population by Race
1860 CENSUS
 (Source: Adapted from De Cunzio and Catts 1990: 76)

New Castle County	European American	African American	Total Pop.	% European American	% African American
Hundreds & Towns:					
Appoquinimink	2952	1120	4072	72	28
Brandywine	4012	173	4185	96	4
Christiana	5178	435	5613	92	8
Mill Creek	3382	272	3654	93	7
New Castle	2839	629	3468	82	18
New Castle (Town)	1506	396	1902	79	21
Pencader	1613	892	2505	64	36
Red Lion	2141	502	2643	81	19
Delaware City	1171	184	1355	86	14
Fort Delaware	68	2	70	97	3
St. Georges (Town)	232	37	269	86	14
St. Georges	2892	1654	4546	64	36
Middletown	472	51	523	90	10
Odessa	511	175	686	75	25
Port Penn	213	27	240	89	11
White Clay Creek	2302	461	2763	83	17
Christiana (Town)	348	94	442	79	21
Newark	693	94	787	88	12
Wilmington	19,044	2214	21,258	90	10
	<u>51,569</u>	<u>9412</u>	<u>60,981</u>		
Kent County					
Hundreds & Towns:					
Dover	3968	1649	5617	71	29
Duck Creek	4144	1597	5714	72	28
Clayton (east side)	933	356	1289	72	28
Smyrna	1561	312	1873	83	17
Smyrna Landing	189	91	280	67	33
Little Creek	1865	784	2649	70	30
Milford	2230	863	3093	72	28
North Milford	800	378	1178	68	32
Misphillion	2900	674	3574	81	19
Murderkill	5223	1907	7130	73	27
	<u>23813</u>	<u>8611</u>	<u>32424</u>		

TABLE 7

POPULATION ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURE, NEW CASTLE AND KENT COUNTIES
1840

COUNTY	HUNDRED	# OF PEOPLE EMPLOYED IN AGRICULTURE	% OF PEOPLE EMPLOYED IN AGRICULTURE *
NEW CASTLE	BRANDYWINE	643	19.0
	WILMINGTON CITY	18	2.2
	CHRISTIANA	546	14.7
	MILL CREEK	694	22.1
	NEW CASTLE	618	22.6
	WHITE CLAY CREEK AND PENCADER	1049	25.2
	RED LION	161	11.5
	ST. GEORGE'S	671	21.5
	APPOQUINIMINK	719	23.4
Total New Castle County		5119	15.5
KENT	DUCK CREEK	665	17.3
	LITTLE CREEK	410	20.0
	DOVER	812	21.4
	MURDERKILL	1204	25.3
	MISPILION	1042	34.0
	MILFORD	471	20.0
Total Kent County		4604	23.2

* Of total number of people living in the Hundred/County

In 1860, 11,417 Delawareans worked on farms. Almost two-thirds of them (63.8%) the census takers counted as farmers, the remainder they identified as farm laborers, except for 11 farmers classified as dairymen (U. S. Bureau of the Census 1864: 48). A decade later, 15,973 Delawareans worked on farms, an increase of almost 30%. Delaware's agricultural laborers, dairymen and dairywomen, farm and plantation overseers, farmers and planters, florists, gardeners and nurserymen, and stockdrovers composed 40% of the laboring population, and 17% of the state's population aged over 10 years. Of these 15,973 agriculturalists, 51% labored on others' farms and 48% owned their own farms. The remaining 1% held the other farm-related occupations noted above (U. S. Bureau of the Census 1872: 674). In the entire state, only 66 girls and women over ten years old were counted as working in agriculture, 54 of them farm laborers. These female farmers and laborers composed only 1% of the state's working women that year (U. S. Bureau of the Census 1872: 675). While Delaware's agricultural workers in 1870 were aged predominantly 16 to 59 (82%), 1,563 boys and 5 girls between 10 and 15 also worked on the state's farms, along with 1,299 men and 40 women over 60 years of age. Finally, Delaware's farming population in 1870 was overwhelmingly native born. Only 3% had been born outside the United States, virtually all in Ireland, England, Wales, or Germany. More immigrants from all these countries worked as agricultural laborers than owned their own farms (U. S. Bureau of the Census 1872: 699, 726).

Students of Delaware's farms, their owners, and laborers have moved beyond these simple statistics to outline the sociocultural context of agriculture in the nineteenth century. Their conclusions are summarized here, followed by the results of the supplementary research undertaken specifically for this historic context. A central feature of the sociocultural context during this period is the composition of the social and economic classes that distinguished Delawareans involved in agriculture. Mayer is not alone in speaking of the agricultural "hierarchy," at the top of which stood the farm owner and operator. Census takers, she notes, variably classified all others working on farms they did not own as "farm laborer, farm hand, works on farm, and apprentice to farming, or simply by the term, laborer" (Mayer 1975: 11-12).

Mayer's study of agriculture in Brandywine, Christiana, St. Georges, and Appoquinimink hundreds in New Castle County between 1850 and 1880 revealed the "prominence of certain families in the rural society of mid-nineteenth century Delaware. In each hundred, three or four families are notable for the size, number, and value of the farms owned or operated by their members" (Mayer 1975: 12-13). These families composed the agricultural elite, and their continuing economic importance across the three decades of her study "speaks strongly of the stability of the population" (Mayer 1975: 15-16) (see also Herman 1987, discussed below). It speaks also of the consolidation of the county's lands in the hands of a small elite during the crisis years preceding 1850.

Native Delawareans dominated farming in all four study hundreds between 1850 and 1880, accounting for over 70% of the farm owners in the southern two hundreds. In some years, almost one-quarter of the northern hundreds' farm owners had been born across the border in Pennsylvania, while in the southern hundreds native Marylanders were more numerous. The northern hundreds were also the home of more immigrant farmers, especially Irishmen in Christiana Hundred (9-20% of the farm owners between 1850 and 1880). The geographical mobility of these hundreds' farmers proved difficult to determine with any accuracy, however Mayer discovered that "in most cases between 50 and 60 percent of the farm operator population for a given census year would stay long enough to be recorded in at least one other census" (Mayer 1975: 18). Persistence rates were consistently higher in the northern hundreds.

Some farm and agricultural estate owners also reported other occupations to the census takers. The nature of these occupations is revealing. In the southern hundreds, most were general merchandise, grain, coal, and lumber dealers, or professionals such as lawyers and physicians. Farm owners in the northern hundreds held these other positions as well, but more worked as farmer-carpenters, stone masons, blacksmiths, butchers, or millers. Throughout the study period, fewer than 5% of the household heads in the southern two hundreds labored outside of agriculture. In the north, non-farmers formed a much larger percent of the population. By 1880, they composed more than 20% of Christiana Hundred's household heads and 15% of Brandywine Hundred's (Mayer 1975: 27-28). Slave ownership in 1850 and 1860 further distinguished northern and southern New Castle County. None of Christiana's or Brandywine's farmers owned slaves in 1850 or 1860. In contrast, 5% of Appoquinimink's farmers in 1850 and 8% in 1860 owned slaves. In St. Georges, these figures reached 26% in 1850 then dropped to 12% in 1860. Most of those in St. Georges in 1850 were children under 10 or women (Mayer 1975: 30).

David Grettler's study of agricultural reform in central Delaware between 1790 and 1840 demonstrated that relations between wealthy farm owners, middling farmers, tenants, and landless laborers were often fraught with tension. Efforts on the part of farm and landowners to alter customary social relations on the land formed one important source of contention. The swine laws enacted in the early nineteenth century provide an illustration. By requiring swine owners to pen and thus feed their animals, farm owners hoped to keep the landless' roaming hogs from ravaging their crops. The poor and the landless, however, relied heavily on their hogs for food and for cash, although they could not afford to feed them and had no land on which to pen them. The contest over swine in central Delaware extended over three decades (Grettler 1990: 35-66).

The evolving social and economic parameters, characteristics, and relations of working Delaware's farms has also been explored by University of Delaware Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering researchers in their study of agricultural tenancy in the Upper Peninsula between 1770 and 1900. In summary, they determined:

Tenant farms accounted for approximately half of the farms in the region...and played a major part in agricultural development. Tenancy offered...advantages to both landlord and tenant. The landlord profited from the contractual improvement of depleted agricultural lands and a solution to the shortage of seasonal farm labor. The tenant gained access to larger, more productive farms, and the chance to acquire more livestock and farming equipment. Such capitalization represented the first step toward the leap into the landowning classes. While tenants and landlords typically formalized arrangements by lease, individual terms and situations varied. Tenancy represented social as well as economic circumstance. Tenants contracted themselves for varying lengths of time, regardless of their age or social status. Tenants came from all walks of life--some owned their own livestock and/or slaves, some even owned land that they rented to others. It was not unusual for a tenant to occupy more than one piece of land, particularly if one was mostly arable, or cleared, land and the other was woodland. As tenants and landlords strove to maximize yields and profits agricultural tenancy contributed to the success of agricultural reform methods in the Upper Peninsula Zone and the accompanying rise in farming production...

Agricultural tenancy is not synonymous with farm labor. Through either verbal or written contracts, landowners arranged for the cultivation and maintenance of their lands... These tenants represented a class of nonlandowning but land holding farmers and farm managers. Other tenants occupied the farm with the landowner or manager and worked at specific seasonal tasks. These individuals, who were typically provided with a small house and garden plot, received wages but seldom profits (or losses) from the harvest. Nonresident, nonlanded day labor represents a third category that augmented the work force of resident tenants and cottagers. Slaves represented a significant but diminishing segment of the agricultural work force...through the mid-nineteenth century (Siders et al. 1991: 3).

Information collected by census takers in 1880 allowed Mayer to explore tenancy in Brandywine, Christiana, Appoquinimink, and St. Georges hundreds. Just under one-half of the southern hundreds' farmers owned their farms, while in Brandywine and Christiana these figures reached 67% and 76% respectively. The northern and southern hundreds differed in the nature of their

tenancy arrangements as well. In Appoquinimink/Blackbird and St. Georges, 44% of the farmers rented for shares; in the northern hundreds, in contrast, 18.5-20% paid a fixed cash fee for their rentals (Mayer 1975: 24).

Farm ownership in all four hundreds exhibited a strong correlation with farmers' ages. Although farm owners in each hundred ranged in age from their early 20s to 80, farm owners' average ages were consistently older than those of tenants (Mayer 1975: 24-26). Overwhelming differences appear, however, in the size and nature of the farm laborer populations between the northern and southern hundreds. "In the northern hundreds, most farms were run by the members of the operator's family and the population of farm laborers was only slightly larger than that of farm operators. While the percentage of black farm laborers was larger than that of the black farm operators, white workers form the overwhelming majority. In the south, the size of the farm labor population was often several times that of the farm operators and generally more than 50% of this classification was made up of blacks" (Mayer 1975: 31-32). Wages paid hired laborers differed among the four hundreds as well. Farmers in the southern hundreds paid their laborers about half the amount paid by northern farmers (Mayer 1975: 32).

Scholl (1992) has also examined labor practices, in his case in the 1830s in St. Georges Hundred. Much of Richard Mansfield's farm journal was taken up with notations of days worked, tasks performed, and wages paid his laborers. Scholl focused his analysis on two sample years, 1830 and 1835. Mansfield employed dozens of laborers to work Achmester Farm, some contracted for a full year, others hired on a day-to-day basis, and others, two male slaves, which Mansfield owned. In 1830 three contracted workers formed the backbone of the farm's workforce. For example, on January 2, Mansfield recorded his contract with Isaac Heynson:

Isaac Heynson agrees to work with me for the next season from Monday next at \$6 pr mo + washing + mending his Linen Cloaths. also to make him 2 pr. Trousers he finding the Linen. He is also to have 2 days in Harvest or to be paid for them, [and] to make up all lost time or so to be deducted from his wages (Quoted in Scholl 1992: 7).

The contracts Mansfield negotiated with these laborers were unequal. One (a free black male with a wife and three children in 1830) received better pay than the others and had the use of a house and garden. Five years later Mansfield recorded contracts for four regular hands. The contracts again noted pay, laundry, board, and a possible share in the harvest.

In both years, day laborers formed the largest group of workers at the farm. On July 25, 1835, for example, "sixteen day laborers, plus the three regular workers and a slave were recorded

as cradling, binding, stacking, and picking up the oat harvest. The laborers included men and women..." (Scholl 1992: 8-9). This entry also typifies Mansfield's use of day laborers, whom he generally hired to complete tasks like harvesting, where timing was crucial (Scholl 1992: 9).

Joan Jensen (1986) has also studied agricultural labor on Delaware Piedmont farms between 1750 and 1850, focusing on the neglected role of women. She too found women working in the fields, harvesting rye, pulling flax, digging potatoes, and harvesting hops and apples. In addition, women performed innumerable other tasks on the farm, forming an indispensable part of the workforce, as wife, daughter, or hired laborer. Women processed flax, preserved meat, processed and preserved other foods and cooked the meals, made candles and soap, spun flax and wool, gardened, laundered, mended clothing, cleaned house, cared for and milked cows, bore and cared for children, and produced butter and cheese for sale at market (Jensen 1986: see especially 36-37, 46-47, 83-91, 126-127). "The sale of a surplus of several hundred pounds [of butter] a year," she determined, "was not a small item in a farm budget. It was often enough to buy most of the commodities the family needed for the household" (Jensen 1986: 83). Other scholars need to follow Jensen's lead and examine in greater depth the roles, contributions, values, and lives of all the members of Delaware's farming population.

African Americans also number among Delaware's nineteenth-century social groups virtually ignored by scholars until recently. Elizabeth Homsey studied free African Americans in Kent County, her study period ending at the beginning of that of this context, in 1830. Between 1790 and 1830, "the lack of undeveloped land suitable for farming, fluctuations in the profitability of agriculture, and the increasing inequality of wealth distribution offered the promise of little more than meager subsistence for many inhabitants. As a result, the county's white population fell three percent...[over this period]. During the same time, however, Kent's total population rose one percent, due to a 121 percent increase of free black inhabitants." Manumission accounted for most of the increase (Homsey 1979: 40-41). Those who were taxpayers were poor. Only 14% owned land, and 44% held livestock. A small elite counted among the landowners; many served as landlords while renting large farms to work themselves. Many of the livestock holders also rented farms (Homsey 1979: 43).

The Emancipation Proclamation freed Delaware's small number of remaining slaves in 1862. Racism and discrimination, however, did not end in 1862. A series of laws severely restricted the activities of African Americans in the later nineteenth century. As Harold Livesay has documented:

As a combination of law and custom, the Negro population of Delaware in 1865 was almost totally illiterate, was rigidly

segregated socially, did not have the right to vote, hold public office, or serve on juries, and was largely confined to menial employment. Free Negroes could not testify in court unless there was no competent white witness. Negro males could be imprisoned for debt... Negroes were not permitted to own firearms or assemble in groups of more than 12 after ten o'clock at night" (Livesay 1968: 89).

Mayer looked at the African American farmers living in New Castle County between 1850 and 1880. They constituted an extremely small percentage of the farm operators. In the northern two hundreds, only seven African American farm operators appear in the census over the 30 year period. Most owned their own farms, but they were very small. George Barrett, for example, owned an 18 acre farm worth \$800 in Christiana Hundred in 1850. Most African American farmers in the southern hundreds, on the other hand, did not own farms (Mayer 1975: 26-27) (see also discussion below of the research on African American farmers, tenants, and laborers conducted by the University of Delaware Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering in the course of preparing the Agricultural Tenancy Historic Context).

One other aspect of the sociocultural context of nineteenth century Delaware agriculture has received attention from some scholars. The agricultural reform movement has already been mentioned. Several agricultural societies established in the state in the nineteenth century not only promoted the reform agenda but also played a role in the social lives of their members (see Grettler 1990; Hancock 1947; Herman 1987; Siders et al. 1991). Near the end of this period, in 1874, Delaware farmers formed another agricultural association, which remains important today--the Delaware State Grange. By the end of that year, 17 Subordinate Granges had already been chartered in Delaware. Their purpose, as the Grange's historian states it, was "to unite people of the soil into an inspiring, educational fraternity" (Passmore 1975: 10). Within a year, Delaware's 24 Subordinate Granges claimed 809 members (Passmore 1975: 16). As discussed in more depth below (see 1880-1940: Sociocultural Context), the Granges labored to promote the economic and social position of the state's agriculturalists through programs of education, cooperatives, and political activism (Passmore 1975).

In developing an historic context for agricultural tenancy in Delaware's Upper Peninsula in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, researchers at the University of Delaware Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering outlined a sociocultural context for their study hundreds, Appoquinimink, Little Creek, and Murderkill. University students and the authors of the present context have worked with the U. S. Population Censuses and tax assessment records to extend this sociocultural context and expand it to include Mill Creek Hundred.

Understanding the study hundreds' demographic characteristics forms the essential first step in developing the context. Between 1840 and 1870, the population of the study hundreds increased between 40% (Appoquinimink) and 68% (Murderkill), and then remained comparatively stable over the rest of the century, as the population grew only 10% between 1870 and 1900. As the population grew, so did the number of households. Household size, in contrast, declined by as much as half over the century. At the beginning of our study period, 1830, 13%-15% of the entire population of each study hundred were between 20 and 29 years of age, "indicat[ing] the probability that a large number of new young families were being formed in the middle of the century" (Siders et al. 1991: 14. The discussion in this section based on Siders et al. only summarizes rather than reiterates their data; refer to the report for additional detail). African Americans formed a comparatively large proportion of this population, between 20% and 40%, throughout the nineteenth century. Overwhelmingly, moreover, these African Americans were free; only 8%-10% of the African American population of the study hundreds through 1860 were enslaved (Siders et al. 1991: 73).

Even as the total population and the number of households grew, landownership remained restricted to between one-third and two-fifths of the hundreds' taxables. Race played a significant role in determining whether an individual would acquire property during this period; landowners were predominantly white and male (Siders et al. 1991: 48, 51). This minority of landowners also controlled most of the hundreds' wealth.

Half of the population owned virtually no taxable property (livestock, silver plate, slaves, land, or boats), while one-tenth of the population controlled between two-thirds and three quarters of the taxable wealth. Although the economic gap between landowners and non-landowners narrowed gradually toward the end of the century, property ownership always conferred distinct economic advantages. In all three hundreds, the majority of landowners in each of the tax assessments were among the wealthiest 20% of the population and the total value of their taxable property was far higher than that of the average taxable...(Siders et al. 1991: 53).

Little Creek Hundred provided the Agricultural Tenancy researchers with a more detailed image of tenancy in nineteenth-century Kent County. More men and African Americans rented farms than their percentages in the general taxable population. Diversity characterized the agricultural tenants in the decade before the start of the present study period. They were distributed through all the wealth deciles, though most (72%) fell in the middle deciles. In 1822, African Americans tenanted 21% of the hundred's farms; this percentage declined sharply to only 8% in 1860 (Siders et al. 1991: 71-72). In the earlier year, more than half of the farms they tenanted were larger than the median

150 acre tenant farm; however, the per acre value of the improved land was much lower than the average, generally between \$6 and \$8. African Americans were thus allowed access only to lands of marginal agricultural use. Similarly, African American taxables clustered in the lower reaches of the hundred's wealth structure. In 1822, half were assessed only for a poll tax. Those who managed to rent a farm were somewhat better off, being much more likely to own some type of taxable property (Siders et al. 1991: 80-81).

By 1860, the landscape of Little Creek Hundred had changed dramatically with regard to the African-American population. The tenant population had decreased by half, while the landowning population more than doubled. There were no women represented in either group. The 11 African-American agricultural tenants occupied farms of at least 30 acres. Farms ranged in size from 30 to 223 acres, but averaged 124 acres. The average value per improved acre was \$20... Most of the farms were about three-quarters improved (Siders et al. 1991: 83).

According to the 1860 Population Census, individuals engaged in farming headed 75% of Little Creek Hundred's households. Forty-one percent (178) identified themselves to the census taker as a "farmer." Fifty-three percent of these farmers (95) owned real estate, or 22% of all the hundred's household heads. The value of 90% of these landed farmers' real estate fell below \$12,000. Another one-third of household heads (45% of those engaged in farming) identified themselves as "laborers;" they have been included here on the assumption they laborered at least part of the time on neighbors' farms. Only one household head called himself a "farm hand," however 234 other farm hands, almost 10% of the entire population of the hundred, lived in the households of others (DiSabatino 1992).

Native Delawareans dominated both the landed and tenant farmer families. Only 16 (17%) of the landed farmers had been born outside the state, and only one outside the United States. Moreover, only one was an African American [this contrasts with the information provided in the 1860 tax assessment, which reported several African American landowners], and four were women, three of them widows. A similar percentage of tenant farmers were non-native Delawareans, but almost half of them were not American born. Three were of African American heritage, and five others the census taker identified as mulatto. No women headed tenant farm households. Landed farmers held more valuable personal estates than tenants in 1860, as well as owning their own farms (or at least some parcel of real estate). Only 5% of the tenants owned personal estates valued over \$2,000; fully 85% held taxable personal property valued under \$1,100. In contrast, 10% of the landed farmers held personal estates worth more than \$2,500. Finally, the ages of the tenant and landed farmers suggest that property ownership was partly a function of the lifecycle. Sixty-

two percent of the hundred's landed farmers were between 31 and 50 years old in 1860. That same year, 67% of the tenant farmers were under 40 years old, and almost one-third had not yet seen their 30th birthday. The 13% of the tenants who had not yet acquired real estate by their 51st birthday were probably unlikely to do so (DiSabatino 1992).

Analysis of the Population Census of Little Creek Hundred taken a decade later, in 1870, has shed further light on the hundred's African American population. Twenty-two percent (54) of the households headed by individuals engaged in agriculture were African American. Only five of them, however, were "farmers;" the remainder, 91%, worked as "farm hands." More than three-quarters of these African American households adopted a similar economic strategy: they lived as nuclear families, the husbands and their sons over 12 worked as farm hands, their wives stayed at home caring for the young children, and the older daughters worked outside of the home as domestic servants (Hollenberg 1992). As Livesay (1968) concluded, emancipation of Delaware's remaining slaves in 1862 did little to improve the opportunities or economic circumstances of the state's African Americans.

Analyses of the 1850 and 1870 Population Censuses for Appoquinimink Hundred and of the Willow Grove section of Murderkill Hundred in 1860 allow comparison with Little Creek. In Appoquinimink in 1850, individuals with agricultural occupations headed just under 60% of the hundred's households (291 of 500). Forty percent of these agricultural households owned real estate, almost twice the percentage of landowning farmers in Little Creek the same year. Eighty-seven percent of the "farming households" were headed by European Americans. While African Americans headed only 13% of the farming households, they accounted for 17% of the landowning farming households. Again, this contrasts rather sharply with Little Creek. As in Little Creek, however, 83% of the farming household heads had been born in Delaware; virtually all those born outside the state migrated from Maryland or New Jersey. Young families dominated the hundred's population at this date. The farming household heads averaged just under 43 years of age, and 75% of their families included children under 10 years of age. Average household size was large, averaging over 7 members. Most households contained 4-11 members. The presence of an average of 3 non-family boarders in just over 60% of the households explains the large household sizes. Thus, even though 70% of the farming households included at least one child over 10 years of age, most farm families appear to have needed live-in laborers to maintain their farms. Landowning farmers owned an average \$6,562 worth of real estate, not inconsistent with the Little Creek figures. Eighty-seven percent owned real estate valued under \$12,000, compared to 90% in Little Creek. In Appoquinimink, half of the landowning farmers owned real estate worth less than \$3,500 (Rintoul 1992).

Twenty years later, Appoquinimink's 348 landed and tenant farm families composed 49% of the hundred's households. Adding those households with members identified by the census takers as working on farms or as unspecified laborers raises the number to 588 households involved directly in farming, or 82% of the hundred's households. Twenty-one percent of the hundred's households owned their own farms, or 43% of the farmers. This figure is over 10% lower than in Little Creek a decade earlier. Their farms averaged \$10,216 in value, a 36% increase over Appoquinimink in 1850. Twelve percent more of the hundred's households were headed by laborers than by landed farmers. Thus the two decades between 1850 and 1870 appear to have witnessed the aggregation of more land into the hands of fewer wealthier farmers. In 1870, non-native Delawareans composed only 14.7% of the hundred's population; 44% of them worked on farms. Only 17% had been born outside of the United States, mostly in Ireland, Germany, or England. African Americans formed 30% of Appoquinimink's total population that year; only 87, fewer than 8%, had been born outside of Delaware. Despite their roots in the state, only 12 of them owned farms (owning 8% of the hundred's farms). Another dozen rented 6% of the hundred's tenant farms. Most, 108, worked as laborers (Blevins 1992). The consolidation of the hundred's lands into the hands of a small elite occurred at the expense of the hundred's African American community; twenty years earlier, they had owned 17% of Appoquinimink's farms.

Almost 85% of the Willow Grove section of Murderkill Hundred's households were headed by farmers and laborers in 1860. The majority the census taker classified as farmers. Women headed virtually none of these farming and laboring households. Most of these household heads were in their 30s in 1860, indicating a population of young families, as in the other study hundreds. Many of these farm heads (40% of them), including younger ones, had a few hired laborers living at and working on the farm. Later, these laborers would be replaced by the farmers' own children. Fathers aged 35 already often had four children, even though their wives were generally even younger. African American farm laborers composed the majority of the boarders, living and working on the area's largest farms. Accepting work of this sort limited these boarders' participation in an African American community, as 94% of them lived and worked on farms owned or operated by European Americans with fewer than three hired hands. That an African American community did exist is suggested by the fact that African Americans headed almost 23% of Willow Grove's households in 1860. As in the other study hundreds, few owned real estate, and their personal property was consistently valued below that of their European American neighbors. Also as in the other hundreds, the vast majority of Willow Grove's farming households were headed by native Delawareans. Only 12% had been born outside Delaware, and 98% of these reported their birthplaces as Pennsylvania or Maryland (Kelleher 1992).

Analyses of the 1837 and 1861 Tax Assessments and of the 1850 Population Census for Mill Creek Hundred have helped clarify the differences in the sociocultural context of agriculture between Delaware's Piedmont and Upper Peninsula zones in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Although the number of taxables in Mill Creek increased from 758 to 884 between 1837 and 1861, in both years only one-third of them owned farms (defined as properties greater than 10 acres following Siders et al. 1991: xiii) (Table 8). Similarly, those who rented farms remained roughly stable at just under one-quarter of the taxables. (These figures remain tentative, as tenant farmers are not identified as such in the tax assessments. For the purposes of this study, those taxables who did not own real estate, but did own livestock, have been designated tenant farmers. Since only the total assessed value of livestock owned appears in the assessments, even this measure is problematic. In Little Creek Hundred in 1822, for example, when the tax assessments provided more complete information on number and type of livestock owned as well as identifying tenants, 75% of the tenants owned livestock (Siders et al. 1991: 72)). The average value of Mill Creek property owners' real estate increased over the study period, however relative values of the property of landowners, farm owners, and multiple property owners remained roughly constant. The average farm value was 10.5% (1837) to 12.1% (1861) higher than the average property value, while the average value of the property owned by multiple property owners was 46.3% (1861) to 48.4% (1837) greater than the value of the average landowner's property.

Few Mill Creek taxables owned more than one property, however, and the percentage decreased, to less than 5%, between 1837 and 1861 (Table 8). In contrast, multiple property owners in Little Creek Hundred between 1822 and 1896 comprised more than twice this percentage (Siders et al. 1991: 58). The number of properties those in Mill Creek owned also decreased over the period, although in both years the median number was only two, as in Little Creek. There, however, the average was higher, almost three properties, across the century, as more property owners owned more than two properties (Siders et al. 1991: 58). Even fewer of the hundred's taxables owned slaves; by 1861 only one Mill Creek taxable, a farmer, owned two slave women. In 1837 too, the majority of slaves may have been women (at least the average value of female slaves was greater). Eight slave owners owned male slaves that year, while 15 owned female slaves. These figures demonstrate slaves were not an important source of field labor for Mill Creek farmers by the 1830s. In 1837, only three of the 17 slave owners rented farms; the rest owned farms ranging in size from 68 to 265 acres. In general, they owned the larger farms, as the average size of their holdings was 68 acres larger than the hundred's average farm. The significance of this figure becomes clear when one considers that 61% of the hundred's farms that year contained fewer than 100 acres.

TABLE 8

**TAX ASSESSMENTS, MILL CREEK HUNDRED, 1837 AND 1861
SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXT**

MILL CREEK HUNDRED					
	<u>1837</u>		<u>1861</u>		
	<u>#</u>	<u>%***</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%***</u>	
FARM OWNERS*	257	34.0	289	33.0	
TENANT FARMS**	160	21.0	209	24.0	
AVERAGE REAL ESTATE VALUE					
- LAND OWNERS	\$2931.85		\$3860.63		
- FARM OWNERS*	\$3274.56		\$4393.12		
- MULTIPLE PROPERTY OWNERS	\$5676.39		\$7185.84		
AVERAGE TOTAL ESTATE					
- LAND OWNERS	\$3368.44		\$4430.47		
- FARM OWNERS*	\$3725.15		\$5079.70		
- NON-LAND OWNERS	\$ 352.63		\$ 356.62		
- MULTIPLE PROPERTY OWNERS	\$6198.48		\$7185.84		
- SLAVE OWNERS	\$7457.47		\$6430.00		
MULTIPLE PROPERTY OWNERS	46	6.0	37	4.0	
- AVERAGE NUMBER OF PROPERTIES OWNED	2.79		2		
- RANGE OF NUMBER OF PROPERTIES OWNED	2-8		2-4		
- MEDIAN NUMBER OF PROPERTIES OWNED	2		2		
SLAVE OWNERS	17	2.24	1	0.1	
- RANGE OF TOTAL ASSESSMENT	\$ 334-\$20226		\$6430.00		
- AVERAGE VALUE					
ALL SLAVES	\$ 152.94		\$ 80		
MALE SLAVES	\$ 60.00		----		
FEMALE SLAVES	\$ 88.53		\$ 80		
- RANGE OF VALUE, SLAVES	\$ 30-640		\$ 80		
- MEDIAN VALUE, SLAVES	\$ 100.00		\$ 80		
- AVERAGE ACREAGE OWNED					
OF ALL SLAVE OWNERS	129.58		100		
OF LAND OWNING SLAVE HOLDERS	157.36		100		
- RANGE OF ACREAGE OWNED	68-265		100		
- TENANT FARMERS	3		0		

* Identified as Taxables owning properties large than 10 acres

** Identified as Taxables owning no real estate, but owning livestock

*** Percentage of Total Taxables

TABLE 8 (cont.)
TAX ASSESSMENTS, MILL CREEK HUNDRED, 1837 AND 1861

SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXT

MILL CREEK HUNDRED

	<u>1837</u>		<u>1861</u>	
	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
WOMEN	31	4.0	39	4.29
- LAND OWNERS	20	64.5 ¹ /6.8 ²	26	66.6 ¹ /7.58 ²
- FARM OWNERS	14	45.1 ¹ /1.8 ³ /5.4 ⁴	18	46.1 ¹ /2 ³ /5.4 ⁴
AFRICAN AMERICANS	10 ⁵	1.3	26	2.94
- LAND OWNERS	1	10 ⁶	1	3.8 ⁶
- ACREAGE OWNED	2		12	
- TENANT FARMERS ⁷	0		2	7.69 ⁶

1 % OF WOMEN TAXABLES

2 % OF ALL LAND OWNERS

3 % OF ALL TAXABLES

4 % OF ALL FARM OWNERS

5 NOT IDENTIFIED IN TAX ASSESSMENT; IDENTIFIED BY COMPARING
ASSESSMENT LIST WITH 1840 CENSUS AND 1861 ASSESSMENT

6 % OF AFRICAN AMERICAN TAXABLES

7 DEFINED AS OWNING LIVESTOCK BUT NO REAL ESTATE

In both tax years, women and free African Americans composed only very small percentages of the hundred's taxables, neither exceeding 5% of the taxables in either year (Table 8) (For 1837, the figures for African American taxables remain problematic. African Americans are not identified in that year's tax assessment. Comparing the list of taxables with the 1840 population census for the hundred and with the 1861 tax assessment, both of which do identify African Americans, has allowed us to identify at least some of them). They thus composed a smaller proportion of Mill Creek's households than in Little Creek or Murderkill Hundreds in any year between 1822 and 1896 (Siders et al. 1991: 49). African Americans remained peripheralized in both years in Mill Creek, essentially denied access to land through either purchase or rental. In Little Creek, in contrast, African Americans held 21% of the tenant farms in 1822, and 11% in 1860. Moreover, in the latter year, the number of African American farm owners in Little Creek had doubled (Siders et al. 1991: 71-72). Approximately two-thirds of the women assessed in Mill Creek in both 1837 and 1861 owned land, but fewer than half of them owned farms, and they accounted for only 5% of the hundred's farm owners in both years. None headed tenant farm households. Little Creek Hundred, in contrast, had female-headed tenant farm households throughout the nineteenth century, although they decreased from 7% to 2% of the tenant households between 1822 and 1896 (Siders et al. 1991: 71).

The total assessed values of Mill Creek's taxables in both 1837 and 1861 reveal a highly uneven distribution of the hundred's wealth (Table 9). In both years, just under 5% of the taxables held 30% of the assessed wealth; the upper 10% held one-half of the hundred's taxable wealth. In Appoquinimink, Little Creek, and Murderkill hundreds, however, even further distance separated the upper 10% of the taxable populations, as this group held between two-thirds and three-quarters of the assessed wealth (Siders et al. 1991: 53). At the other end of the hierarchy, almost three-quarters of the taxables in 1837 and just over three-quarters in 1861 together owned only 20% of the taxable wealth. Ownership of real estate obviously formed the basis of the wealth hierarchy. In 1837, only 16 taxables (or 4%) in the lowest wealth decile owned any real estate; only five owned farms. By 1861, this number had increased to 48 (8%) taxables in the lowest wealth decile; 11 of them held farms containing no more than 20 acres.

The distribution of multiple property owners, women, and African Americans in the wealth structure differed from that of the total taxable population. In 1837, almost one-third of the multiple property owners numbered among the top 5% of the taxables; this percentage had increased to over 40% by 1861. In both years, all the African American taxables fell within the lowest two wealth deciles, compared to roughly 75% of all taxables. A greater percentage of the more numerous tenant and landowning farmers in Little Creek Hundred in both 1822 and 1860 owned assessed wealth that placed them in higher wealth deciles (Siders et al. 1991: 72).

TABLE 9

WEALTH HOLDING BY TOTAL ASSESSMENT, MILL CREEK HUNDRED, 1837 AND 1861

WEALTH DECILES, BASED ON TOTAL ASSESSMENTS (LOWEST TO HIGHEST)	<u>TAXABLES</u>			
	<u>1837</u>		<u>1861</u>	
	#	%	#	%
0-10% (\$20-\$400)* (\$40-\$854)**	388	51.2	562	63.6
10-20% (\$408-\$1400)* (\$860-\$2962)**	160	21.1	111	12.5
20-30% (\$1424-\$2272)* (\$3050-\$4044)**	62	8.2	49	5.5
30-40% (\$2281-\$3301)* (\$4074-\$5000)**	42	5.5	37	4.2
40-50% (\$3305-\$4257)* (\$5025-\$5831)**	31	4.1	32	3.6
50-60% (\$4260-\$5500)* (\$5876-\$7055)**	24	3.2	26	2.9
60-70% (\$5547-\$6892)* (\$7100-\$8057)**	18	2.4	23	2.6
70-80% (\$6998-\$8144)* (\$8224-\$10000)**	15	2.0	18	2.0
80-90% (\$8636-\$12425)* (\$10000-\$12771)**	11	1.4	15	1.7
90-100% (\$13577-\$24927)* (\$13204-\$18967)**	7	1.2	11	1.2

* Individual Total Assessments, 1837

** Individual Total Assessments, 1861

Only 55% of the women in 1837 and 44% in 1861, on the other hand, were in these lowest two wealth deciles. Only 2.5% (1861) to 3.2% (1837) of the female taxables, however, numbered among the hundred's wealthiest 5% of taxables.

Comparing Mill Creek Hundred's taxables' personal estates (defined as including the assessed value of livestock, silver plate, slaves, and the taxable's poll tax) with total assessments reveals that land ownership accounts for much of the inequity in the distribution of the Hundred's wealth in both 1837 and 1861 (Tables 9 and 10). In 1837 just under 15% of the taxables held 30% of the assessed value of personal estates; this proportion had declined to 11% by 1861. The upper 30% of the taxables based on assessed personal estate controlled 50% of the Hundred's personal estate value in 1837; this figure too had declined by 1861, to 22%. At the other end of the hierarchy, 40% of the taxables in 1837 and almost 50% in 1861 together accounted for only 20% of the Hundred's assessed personal estates' value.

The distribution of multiple property owners, women, and African Americans in the personal wealth structure differed too from that of the total taxable population. In 1837, the personal estate of 22% of the multiple property owners fell in the top decile of personal estate values; multiple property owners that year accounted for 40% of the taxables in the uppermost decile. Another 28% of them fell in the next two deciles. At the same time, one-third of them counted among the taxables in the lowest decile. These 15 individuals clearly chose to invest in land rather than in other taxable wealth. By 1861, the distribution of personal estate among multiple property owners had changed. Almost 20% of them still numbered among the poorest 10% of the Hundred's taxables (as measured by non-landed estate), but the rest were fairly evenly distributed among the upper 7 deciles. Multiple property owners that year, for example, accounted for only 16% of the taxables in the upper decile. The Hundred's 32 women taxed in 1837 fell almost exclusively in the lowest decile (81%) of personal estate owners, principally because they were not assessed a poll tax. Although this was true in 1861 as well, fewer than three-quarters of the Hundred's 40 taxable women had personal estates valued in the lowest decile. The poll tax, however, does not explain the dismal economic position of the Hundred's taxable African Americans. More than half of the nine identified African American taxables in 1837 fell in the lowest decile of personal estate values, and all but one of the rest numbered in the next three deciles. By 1861, their situation had worsened; 92% of the 26 African American taxables numbered among the Hundred's taxables with personal estate values in the lowest 10%.

In both 1837 and 1861, tenant farmers were underrepresented in both the lowest and highest deciles of taxables based on personal estate (Tables 10 and 11). Generally, livestock ownership determined a tenant farmer's place in the Hundred's personal wealth

TABLE 10

WEALTH HOLDING BY PERSONAL ESTATE, MILL CREEK HUNDRED, 1837 AND 1861

WEALTH DECILES, BASED ON PERSONAL ESTATE (LOWEST TO HIGHEST)	<u>TAXABLES</u>		<u>1861</u>	
	<u>1837</u>			
	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
0-10% (\$16-\$300)* (\$40-\$200)**	200	26.4	269	30.4
10-20% (\$300)* (\$200-\$300)**	95	12.5	155	17.5
20-30% (\$300-\$321)* (\$300-\$355)**	93	12.3	112	12.6
30-40% (\$322-\$400)* (\$360-\$500)**	80	10.6	89	10.1
40-50% (\$400-\$442)* (\$500-\$622)**	69	9.1	63	7.1
50-60% (\$444-\$515)* (\$624-\$721)**	63	8.3	51	5.7
60-70% (\$515-\$611)* (\$722-\$815)**	51	6.7	45	5.1
70-80% (\$616-\$693)* (\$817-\$910)**	43	5.7	40	4.5
80-90% (\$693-\$899)* (\$911-\$1050)**	37	4.9	34	3.8
90-100% (\$916-\$1730)* (\$1050-\$2420)**	25	3.3	25	2.8

* Individual Total Assessments, 1837

** Individual Total Assessments, 1861

*** Personal Estate = Total of Value of Livestock, Slaves, Silver Plate owned, and Poll Tax

TABLE 11

**WEALTH HOLDING BY PERSONAL ESTATE, TENANT FARMERS,
MILL CREEK HUNDRED 1837 AND 1861**

WEALTH DECILES BASED ON PERSONAL ESTATE ¹ (LOWEST TO HIGHEST)	1837			1861		
	NO.	% OF TENANT FARMS	% OF TAXABLES IN DECILE	NO.	% OF TENANT FARMS	% OF TAXABLES IN DECIL
0-10%	16 ²	10.0	8.0	11 ¹¹	5.5	4.1
10-20%	0	0	0	50 ¹²	25.1	32.3
20-30%	34 ³	21.4	36.6	26 ¹³	13.1	23.2
30-40%	35 ⁴	22.0	43.8	50 ¹⁴	25.1	56.1
40-50%	17 ⁵	10.7	24.6	24 ¹⁵	12.1	38.1
50-60%	27 ⁶	17.0	42.9	12 ¹⁶	6.0	23.5
60-70%	12 ⁷	7.5	23.5	5 ¹⁷	2.5	11.1
70-80%	11 ⁸	7.0	25.6	10 ¹⁸	5.0	25.0
80-90%	3 ⁹	1.9	8.1	9 ¹⁹	4.5	26.4
90-100%	4 ¹⁰	2.5	16.0	2 ²⁰	1.0	8.0
	159			199		

-
- 1 PERSONAL ESTATE=Total of values of Livestock, Silver Platte, and Poll Tax
 2 Include 7 Women, 6 Taxables with livestock worth under \$13
 3 Includes 1 African American, 1 Woman; livestock valued \$9-315: \$9-21=33;
 1 Woman with value of \$315
 4 Includes 2 Women; livestock valued \$24-329: \$24-88=33;
 2 Women with values \$294-329
 5 Livestock valued \$14-138: 6 with values \$12-20; 11 with values \$108-138
 6 Livestock valued \$45-215
 Livestock valued \$90-311
 Livestock valued \$60-362
 9 Includes 1 African American; livestock valued \$301-469
 10 Livestock valued \$544-614
 11 Includes 6 Women, 1 African American; livestock valued \$15-168: 6 Women with
 values \$40-168, 2 Men with values \$15-18, 3 with values \$50-100
 12 Includes 2 Women, 1 African American; livestock valued \$15-258: 2 Women with
 values \$240-278, 38 Men with values \$15-30, 10 with values \$38-100
 13 Livestock valued \$10-121: 15 Men with values \$10-30, 10 with values \$40-121
 14 Includes 3 Women; livestock valued \$60-442: 3 Women with values \$360-442,
 Men with values \$60-196
 15 Livestock valued \$40-315; 3 Men with values less than \$200
 16 Livestock valued \$240-412: 3 Men with values \$240-282
 17 Includes 1 Woman; livestock valued \$427-757: 1 Woman with a value of \$757,
 4 Men with values \$427-500
 18 Livestock valued \$472-600
 19 Livestock valued \$346-730: 1 Man with a value less than \$500
 20 Livestock valued \$752-1027

structure (Table 11, see especially Notes). Many of the 45 "tenant farmers" owning livestock valued less than \$21 in 1837 along with many of the 55 "tenant farmers" owning livestock valued below \$30 in 1861, as well as several of those owning more valuable livestock, may not in fact have been tenant farmers. Many, though, probably at least worked as farm hands or laborers. These individuals account for many of the "tenant farmers" in the lowest three personal estate deciles. Female farm tenants, on the other hand, because they were not assessed a poll tax, consistently fall into lower deciles than if placed solely on the basis of their livestock values. In 1837, the seven women in the lowest decile held livestock valued comparable to that of men in the 5th through 8th deciles. The women in the 2nd and 3rd deciles owned livestock valued in the range of those of men in the 8th and 9th deciles. In 1861, the two women in the 2nd decile owned livestock comparable to the men in the 5th decile; the three women in the 4th decile placed among the men of the 6th and 7th deciles in value of livestock owned.

The 1850 Population Census extends our understanding of Mill Creek Hundred in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, supplementing the Tax Assessments with the information it contains on household and family size, structure, composition, and origin. Forty-two percent of the hundred's 563 households were headed by individuals engaged in farming or listed as laborers. This compares with 60% in Appoquinimink in 1850 (Rintoul 1992), 75% in Little Creek in 1860 (DiSabatino 1992), and 85% in the Willow Grove section of Murderkill in 1860 (Kelleher 1992). Just over one-quarter of the farmers owned no real estate, and appear to have formed a tenant farmer class. This is a substantially smaller figure than computed for any of the other study hundreds: 47% in Little Creek in 1860 (DiSabatino 1992), 57% in Appoquinimink in 1870 (Blevins 1992), and 60% in Appoquinimink in 1850 (Rintoul 1992). Sixty Mill Creek households (25%) in 1850 were headed by laborers, more than 25% of them African Americans (Zuk 1992: 2, 6). In Little Creek, in contrast, laborers headed 45% of the households in 1860 (DiSabatino 1992).

Compared to the other study hundreds, the average age of Mill Creek's household heads in 1850 was older. Farmers averaged 48 years old, non-farmers almost 53 years of age, laborers 41, and African American household heads 46. Farm households were considerably larger than non-farm households, with an average of over six members, compared to under four in non-farm households. Sons especially remained in the parental home to older ages than in non-farming families. Laborers' households fell between these two extremes in size, containing an average of just over four members (Zuk 1992: 2, 6).

The hundred's farmers in 1850 owned the largest average estates, mostly due to the value of their real estate. Farmers' estates averaged \$5,953, laborers' averaged \$575, and the

households headed by storekeepers, manufacturers, and blacksmiths owned estates valued at an average of \$2238 (Zuk 1992: 3). Appoquinimink farmers, in contrast, held more valuable farms. In 1850, their average value was \$6,562 (Rintoul 1992); by 1870 it had increased to \$10,216 (Blevins 1992).

Fifty-five percent of Mill Creek's household heads in 1850 had been born in Delaware. In contrast, over 83% of the African American household heads gave Delaware as their birthplace. Of the household heads born elsewhere, 18% immigrated from neighboring Pennsylvania, 5% from Ireland, and smaller numbers hailed from Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Ohio, Germany, Scotland, and Switzerland. Thirty percent of the household heads born in Delaware owned farms, worth an average \$7348, \$1395 higher than the average for all the hundred's farms. Farmers born in Pennsylvania owned farms worth an average of \$400 lower than the overall average, while those born outside the United States owned the least expensive farms, worth an average of only about \$2700 (Zuk 1992: 4-5). Clearly family roots in Mill Creek's land provided farmers of European American heritage with a distinct advantage in acquiring and maintaining ownership of the hundred's most highly valued farms.

Thirty-six European American-headed households included African Americans. Most housed only one, the average was just under two, and the range between one and six. The average estate value of the households in which they lived was \$7,389.38, identifying them as the hundred's wealthiest farmers. The African Americans' average age was considerably younger than that of household heads, only 22 years. Fewer than 7% of the African Americans living in European American-headed households were listed as slaves in 1850 (Zuk 1992: 6-7).

Herman has emphasized two main factors in his interpretations of Delaware's architecture and agricultural landscape as communicators of sociocultural meaning: vernacular cultural traditions, and the social and economic position and aspirations of the buildings' and landscapes' creators. Northern New Castle County, southern Kent and Sussex counties, and the central coastal plain of southern New Castle and northern Kent counties comprised Delaware's three overlapping vernacular building zones. Piedmont New Castle builders were heavily influenced by the house types and construction methods employed by their northern neighbors in Chester and Delaware counties, Pennsylvania. Much of central Delaware, in contrast, has been "characterized by a building idiom of subregional solutions derived from the melding together of...various settlement networks..."(Herman 1982: 179, 181).

In Architecture and Rural Life in Central Delaware, 1700-1900, Herman sees the architecture and landscape of the region's nineteenth-century farmers and farm workers as principally functioning to express, create, and maintain social and economic

relations. Besides constructing impressive, elegant, stylish "mansion" houses for themselves, the small, wealthy agricultural elite also constructed the tenant houses that most of the population inhabited (Herman 1987: 181-182, 186).

Not merely size and style but also the use and functional segregation of space characterized elite architecture of the post-1830 period.

In practice, a parlor and either a sitting or a dining room occupied the front of the house. Situated behind a balanced facade, entered under a porch, and buffered by a stair passage, these two most elaborate rooms in the house were simultaneously the most public, due to their disposition at the front of the house, and the least accessible to everyday domestic traffic. Their furnishings emphasized domestic display for Sunday company, and everyday use was held to a minimum. The most heavily used rooms were further back in the house and open to the outside through separate entries. Sitting rooms, nurseries, offices, and kitchens stretched away from the front of the houses...

...[T]he upstairs arrangement of chambers or bedrooms echoed the same pattern. The chambers at the front of the house held the most valuable objects. Behind these principal chambers stretched a series of less well-appointed rooms, culminating in servant's quarters or storage over the kitchen. Detached from the main block of the house, but located in the immediate yard, were woodsheds, privys, icehouses, smokehouses, and other household support structures... The agricultural and work buildings of the farm were at the end of a lane behind the dwelling complex (Herman 1987: 193-197).

What was perfected during the rebuilding period in the middle decades of the 1800s was the architectural ordering of a rural class structure around the concept of an estate which, over time, became a more factory-like agricultural enterprise. The significance of the rebuilding of southern New Castle County is that it articulated in architectural terms a set of social and economic interrelationships...

The new arrangements of rooms in the house and farm buildings in the agricultural complex were locally identified as part of a larger progress:... first, [an] increase in [the] agricultural economy and the material betterment of all things contributing to that economy; second, the stabilization of social and economic relationships...

The nineteenth-century rebuilding of southern New Castle County transfigured the architectural order in a relatively short period of time. The root of the transfiguration was the control of the land itself. Those who could afford and

maintain the luxury of social distance pursued the ideal of a rigidly class-structured community (Herman 1987: 230-233).

Basic changes in Delaware included the emergence of a landed class and the erosion of customary relationships within the community. Domestic architecture expressed various qualities of social outlook and organization; buildings symbolized social status, economic attainment, and agricultural progress. The architecture of the mid-nineteenth century also expressed the disintegration of local culture...

The cause for change lies in the fact that those who pursued the rebuilding and consolidated its values had embraced new ideas about the way in which home, farm, and village were socially structured. Where a sense of social class, stratified by the ability to hold land and acquire money, emerged as an organizing principal of community, those individuals with the power conferred by material possessions raised monuments to their own lives...(Herman 1987: 239-242).

Just as Herman constructed his interpretations of the roles and meanings of architecture and the agricultural landscape on a foundation of farm and farmer biographies, archaeologists have assembled farm biographies in the course of their research (see also 1. **Agricultural Production** and D. **Contributions of Previous Archaeological Research on Farmsteads, 1830-1940**). The composition, organization, and occupational structure of farming households has numbered among their concerns as they pieced together the stories of individual farms. Although they have not yet attempted the broad synthesis Herman has drawn from his study of architecture, nevertheless their family biographies provide significant information on personal strategies, social and economic relations, and the values that created and supported them.

In 1833, John Reed, owner of a 145 acre farm on East Chestnut Hill Road in Ogletown, White Clay Creek Hundred, died. His possessions were sold to satisfy creditors, and thus an inventory survives. A record of the sale, it nevertheless appears to have been essentially a room-by-room listing of the contents of Reed's log house. The well-furnished home contained a sparsely furnished kitchen that nevertheless held the basic accoutrements of food preparation and preservation along with an assortment of other farming and household equipment. Reed's bedroom contained two bedsteads, a table, washstand, over a dozen Windsor chairs, and a portion of his library, including "2 vol. Agriculture." In another room, the Reeds stored part of their extensive collection of bed and table linens as well as ceramic and glass tableware and silverware. A second chamber, perhaps Mrs. Reed's, contained another bed, bedding, a bureau and chest of drawers, chairs, a stand, a dressing glass, and a looking glass. The carpeted best room contained a dining table, card tables, an eight day clock, a desk, candlesticks, and mantle ornaments. Reed's widow numbered

among the purchasers at the sale, forced to pay \$93.94 for the essentials she required to continue housekeeping--a skillet, two iron pots, a brass kettle, a tub, a table, six plates, a pair of fireplace shovel and tongs, a chair, the clock, the carpet, a bedstead and bedding, a fish barrel, a soap stand, a safe, a lot of boards, a gig and harness, a sorrell mare, and the time of a servant girl and boy. The boy's time alone accounted for 53% of her expenditures, and in addition she paid \$10 each for the horse, gig, and clock (Coleman et al. 1983: Appendix 7).

Edward Hamman of Pencader Hundred purchased the 260 acre farm along the Christina River west of Christiana known by archaeologists as the Whitten Road farm in 1834. Within three years, he had attained a position among the upper 1% of White Clay Creek Hundred's taxables, although his farm remained mortgaged until several years after his death. One male slave assisted with the farm work, along with tenants living in the buildings that formed the original eighteenth-century farm. Edward and Rebecca's five children would still have been fairly young, although they may nevertheless have assumed responsibilities around the farm. Hamman no longer owned a slave by the end of the decade, and within six years he had died. By this time, two of his three sons had reached 21 years of age. Because of the mortgage on the farm, however, ownership could not pass to them until after 1851. In fact, it never did. Two years later, Edward Hamman's estate was sold at auction to settle the Orphans Court case, except for the "Widows Dower" and "Widow Woodland" of 82 acres (Shaffer et al. 1988: 56, 58-59, 63).

In 1829 William Hawthorn finally purchased his father's farm from his siblings, seven years after his mother's death. Now that William owned his own 123 acre farm near Christiana in White Clay Creek Hundred, he felt secure enough to marry, taking Matilda Morrison as his wife the following year. Within eight years they had three sons; two years later William died. The census for that year recorded that a young male and a young female slave, a hired farm hand, and a female domestic servant lived with Matilda and her young children, assisting with the farm's operation. Tax assessments consistently placed Hawthorn in the upper 7% of the Hundred's taxables between 1816 and 1840, just below the Hammans. The inventory of William's estate, taken in 1840, thus offers insight into the consumer decisions of a wealthy, successful commercial farmer (Coleman et al. 1984: 52-53, 55-57). Hawthorn's estate, exclusive of the value of his farm, was appraised at \$1,357.90. Twenty-one percent of this amount the Hawthorns had invested in household furnishings. This compares to just over a third of the estate invested in livestock, 15.5% in the tools and equipment required to work the farm and transport the produce to market, 5% in the unexpired time of an African American boy, and 23.5% in agricultural produce and food staples for the household. The upstairs chamber(s) contained three well-outfitted beds and one inexpensive bedstead with sacking, perhaps for the servant boy,

along with a bureau, a few other pieces of furniture, chairs, and linens. Downstairs, the parlor held the most expensive furnishings, including carpeting valued at \$38, mahogany tables and chairs, china and glassware, the family's silver spoons, and a mantle glass and lamps. The adjoining common room was furnished more simply, although it did house the family clock and brass candlesticks and waiters. The least expensive, most utilitarian furnishings and household equipment resided in the kitchen (Coleman et al. 1984: 55, 232-234). Thus by 1840, the Hawthorn family had segregated and stratified household space in the manner Herman describes.

A decade later, William's brother John still managed the farm. William's son William, who was to inherit it, had not yet come of age. William, 17 in 1850, and his uncle lived on the farm with Margaret Barton, 20, probably a domestic servant. By 1860, William had taken over the farm and had married Emma, five years his junior, who had bore him a daughter the year before. His brother George lived with the family and worked on the farm, along with an older farm laborer and a domestic servant. Over the next decade, the Hawthorns had two more sons and a daughter. The 1870 census reports that in that year a 26 year old Prussian immigrant assisted William with the farm work, and a 15 year old girl from Pennsylvania helped Emma with the housework (Coleman et al. 1984: 239-240). Thus over several generations the Hawthorns perpetuated their family through their ties to the land. As each generation passed through the lifecycle, the family adapted itself as necessary to meet the demands of the farm, the economy, and the goals its members had set out for themselves.

These stories contrast with that of Sidney Stump and his family. Stump, an African American, never moved up the agricultural ladder beyond the lowest rung of farm laborer. He had emigrated to northern Delaware from Maryland, probably around 1865. In 1875, however, at the age of about 35, Stump purchased a house and lot on the northern periphery of Glasgow. The 1880 Census reported that Stump was married, his wife Rachel three years his junior, and that the couple had three children: a 15 year old son and younger adopted children, one son and one daughter. Both sons worked as farm laborers with their father, although they had been unemployed between one-quarter and one-third of the preceding year. None of the family members could read or write. They were, however, members of a sizable African American community in Pencader Hundred, which in 1870 numbered 890 people, or 35% of the hundred's population.

The church often formed both the social and spiritual center of Delaware's nineteenth-century African American communities, and contributed in important ways to the communities' economic well-being as well. This appears to have been the case in Glasgow. There the Stumps joined the St. Thomas A. U. M. P. church located just outside of town. The well-established Pencader African

American community, perhaps in conjunction with family ties, drew Stump to the area in the chaotic years of the Civil War. With the community's support and hard work, Stump was able to join the ranks of the propertied a decade later. Perhaps in order to give something back to the community that had assisted him, he and his wife adopted and provided for two orphaned local children (Catts and Custer 1990: 66-71). Family and community appear more tightly interwoven for the Stumps than for the European American and Hawthorn and Hamman families of northern New Castle County.

Jensen (1986) reminds us that the sociocultural context of agriculture in Delaware in the nineteenth century encompasses many things in addition to demography--class, labor practices, the construction and reconstruction of gender roles and relations, the evolution of ethnic cultures, neighborhood and community structures and organizations, political culture, religion and belief systems, and the material culture that facilitated and mediated these components of the culture of agriculture. Much research remains to be done in each of these areas.

The work accomplished to date and reported here has focused on several issues. Historians have documented the recovery of the population and the decrease in household size as new farm households were established in the decades following the agricultural crisis of the early nineteenth century. Scholars have defined the agricultural hierarchy that framed the sociocultural context of nineteenth-century New Castle and Kent counties. The small elite of wealthy farm owners who controlled between 50% and 75% of the study hundred's wealth, the larger middle group of farmers who owned smaller and/or less expensive farms, the tenants, the farm hands and laborers living in their own houses or in houses owned by others, and those living in the homes of their employers, and the small group of slaves held by the counties' farmers before 1862 appear clearly in the primary records. Diversity in the size and composition of each of these groups characterized the study hundreds at any point in time and over time; researchers have so far sketched the outlines of this diversity. More work is needed to fill in the image, and to further illuminate relations between the groups.

In recent years, Delaware's African Americans and women have received scholarly attention, beginning to fill other voids in our knowledge. Their voices and those of the children of the state's farming population still need to be more distinctly and fully heard. Much less attention has been given to the social, economic, and spiritual associations and institutions Delaware's farmers established and relied on for support. Little is known of the role of religion and church institutions in the lives of Delaware's farming population; the agricultural societies and educational institutions, though not discussed at length in this context, have been the subject of some study.

Researchers at the University of Delaware Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering and others have documented much of the surviving agricultural architecture and landscape of this period, and have begun the complex task of unraveling their many social as well as utilitarian functions and meanings. The biographical studies of a small sample of the counties' nineteenth-century farms by archaeologists at the University of Delaware Center for Archaeological Research and other institutions have shed much light on the individuals behind the statistics, and serve as a strong reminder of our need to follow the histories of individual families and farms to truly understand Delaware agriculture. Archaeological studies such as these, which take advantage of available historical documentation, surviving material culture, and the archaeological record, can reveal household demographics, occupational structures, economic strategies, social positions, community contexts and involvement, education, ethnic identifications, religious affiliations, the roles of religious, social, and economic ideologies in family life and decision-making, and the uses and meanings of material culture in these families' lives.